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Introduction to Media Relations
The Importance of Public Relations

The most efficient and credible way to share your organization’s key messages and compelling stories is through public relations. To let others know that mentoring is effective, transformational for mentors and mentees, and more volunteers are needed, a comprehensive public relations plan with strong media relations is important. If done well, these efforts will:

- Add **CREDIBILITY** to your organization and the work you do
- Increase **COVERAGE** across a wide variety of relevant media outlets
- Build **AWARENESS** and support from key constituents, legislators and community members
- Change the public’s **PERCEPTIONS** of mentoring in Minnesota

Understanding the Media

Before you begin reaching out to reporters to pitch stories and develop relationships, here is insight into working with various media outlets.

**Newspapers**

The "beat" system used by newspapers allows for more specialized reporting. Daily and weekly newspapers follow national industry news but focus most on covering local news. Consider the following newspaper beats when distributing news about your organization:

- General assignment
- Business
- Education
- Consumer
- Lifestyle/Features
- Editorial page
- Philanthropy
- Calendar/Events
- Photo Desk

**TIP!** Know who to target and try different angles with daily newspapers.

**EXAMPLE:** The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota’s (MPM) *State of Mentoring* report was covered by the Star Tribune’s philanthropy columnist.

General news coverage is directed by the city editor or managing editor. The editorial page editor is responsible for editorials.
**TIP!** If you are planning an advertising or recruitment campaign, ask a mentor in your program, a business leader who is a champion of mentoring or a parent/guardian to write an editorial about their experience with your program. Make sure to provide helpful information so they can tie their editorial to your key messages.

For community events, send a media advisory two to three weeks before your event that explains who, what, where, when and why to the calendar/events editor. Deadlines for event listings are often strict.

Also, send your media advisory to the photo desk. Most daily newspapers have staff photographers who shoot different events and interviews around town. Due to limited space, a compelling photo from the event with a caption may run in place of an article.

Weekly and community newspapers typically have small staffs and are more likely to publish photos submitted by readers, so be sure to share photos with your local papers.

**TIP!** Build strong relationships with your weekly and community newspapers. These papers focus exclusively on local news and are well read by community members.

**Television**

Television is a medium of feeling. Viewers react to appearances, voice, attitude and style. TV stations follow national/regional news, and, if applicable, will try to “localize” a national story. TV coverage can be 10-second news headlines or edited sit-down interviews.

Common TV beats include:
- General assignment
- Education
- Political
- Health
- Consumer
- Sports
- Investigative

**TIP!** If you have a local angle to a regional/national story, contact your local TV station assignment editor with an interview source and visuals. Without visuals, you don’t have a TV story.

**Radio**

Radio stations like sound bites—information that can be shared quickly. Radio spots often range from 10 to 30 seconds and may be repeated several times in a day. News has the greatest impact in the morning, followed by the afternoon drive-time period.
Radio stations also conduct live and taped interviews, often by phone, with subject matter experts. A typical radio interview lasts three to five minutes. Radio reporters rely on creating a mental picture for listeners. They seek conversational, interesting and purposeful interviewees who can draw pictures with words and deliver a few well-phrased points.

**TIP!** Radio stations have devoted social media followers and often have giveaway contests, so they receive repeat traffic. If there is an opening, start a conversation on a station’s Facebook page. For example, if a DJ talks about mentoring on the air, post a comment and ask others about their mentoring experiences. Take advantage of conversation starters.

**Wire Services**

Distributing press releases, photos and videos through wire services such as PR Newswire, BusinessWire, Marketwire or other vendors is an efficient and affordable way to share your organization’s news with multiple outlets at the same time. Costs vary depending on service and type of release, but typically start at $129 for a basic PR Newswire release and increase based on length of release, features included (e.g. video content or social media press releases) and reach. This tactic results in online pick up of press releases and can help with search engine optimization to drive traffic to your website. To do this, be sure to hyperlink the websites listed in your press release.

The Minnesota Newspaper Association also offers a system for distributing news to member newspapers. Plus there are a number of free press release distribution services online, some of which may be of interest depending on the scope of your media relations program.

**Magazines**

Magazines offer your organization a great opportunity for longer and more in-depth stories. When sharing a story idea with a magazine reporter or editor, be sure to offer examples and interview sources. Most cities and suburbs have a lifestyle magazine that may be relevant for mentoring stories.

**TIP!** The lead time, a period of time that a producer or reporter needs to prepare a story or information for a publication or a broadcast, for magazines is longer than with other media. Magazine issues are often planned three to six months in advance, so keep this in mind when planning your organization’s communications for the year.
Trade and Ethnic Publications

If you have news that would be of interest to a particular business or professional services community, consider reaching out to trade publications that serve that particular business community.

**TIP!** If you’re trying to reach HR professionals about mentor recruitment in the business community, research HR trade publications and newsletters to target this niche audience.

If you have an interesting multicultural story, search publications that serve that specific community and then reach out with a relevant, personalized story idea.

Blogs and Social Media

The lines have blurred between traditional and social media relations. Sharing news and story ideas with bloggers through social media websites is now an integrated part of media relations. There are more bloggers than reporters these days due to every major media outlet hosting blogs and with the popularity of independent blogs.

**EXAMPLE:** The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota’s *State of Mentoring* report findings were depicted in an infographic and infobites that were shared via its Facebook and Twitter accounts. The infographic was picked up by Minnesota-based parenting blog Motherhood Mindfully.

**TIP!** Infobites are nuggets of information broken out from a larger data set so they’re easy to understand and digest.
Working with just one type of media outlet is not a successful media relations strategy. To reach a wider audience, tell your mentoring stories through a variety of mediums.

**EXAMPLE:** The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota’s *State of Mentoring* report press release was distributed to PR Newswire and Minnesota-based newspapers, blogs and television and radio stations to gain coverage in multiple mediums. Newspapers (dailies and campus papers), a blogger and several radio stations published the results of the report as shown below. This media relations campaign reached more than 25 million impressions.
Media Outreach
Preparing for Media Outreach

When contacting media, offer compelling news, an interview source, images, video footage and other relevant assets. Start with who you know and expand your list from there. Most importantly, be brief. Reporters don’t have time for long-winded emails or calls. Additional tips include:

- Know what’s newsworthy.
- Offer facts and specific examples, but let a reporter run with the story.
- Be available, responsive and honor a reporter’s deadline.
- Share the TRUTH always (no exaggerations, no exceptions).
- Share human-interest stories – the best stories make an emotional mark.
- Grab a reporter’s attention with your subject line or first sentence.
- Offer easy to access resources and subject matter expertise.
- Be patient – newsrooms are hectic environments and stories get bumped.

**EXAMPLE:** The press release and email pitch for the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota’s *State of Mentoring* report was sent to the Star Tribune’s lifestyle and philanthropy columnists. As a courtesy, MPM also shared the information with a business reporter with whom the organization has worked with in the past. Recognizing the story was not a fit for his column, he shared the story with his colleague and it was covered. Lesson learned: Establish media relationships.

A rule of thumb is to give all media an equal shot when releasing news. However, it’s always best to customize pitches to specific reporters and media outlets. It shows you care about the story that you’re pitching and that you’ve taken time to learn about specific reporters and their coverage areas.

**Writing Key Messages**

As with any good communication, it’s important to know your audience and tailor your key messages to them. They should be short, memorable and to the point. Work through the following process when crafting key messages:

- Identify who your key audiences are and what types of messages are important to them.

**TIP!** Do you want to recruit more volunteers? If so, your messages should highlight the benefits of being a mentor and the ways that mentoring has a positive impact on individuals, families, schools and communities.
• Write down as much as you can about what’s important to your organization. Include the outcomes you achieved, what it took to accomplish those outcomes and the future goals of your organization.

• Categorize the information from most important to least.

• Condense the information into five to seven brief talking points that you can memorize.

To make sure you are getting to the heart of your message, continue to ask yourself “So what?” when you read your draft key messages out loud.

Building a Media List

If you’re going to communicate with the media on a regular basis, you need a solid list that can evolve over time. For most media today, the preferred means of communication is email. However, follow-up calls are recommended to make sure your press release or pitch was received and to put a human touch on your outreach.

**TIP!** Some media outlets do not accept attachments from outside sources. Copy and paste your press release into the body of your email instead of attaching it.

A few resources for building a Minnesota media list and media relations practices:

• Minnesota Newspaper Association’s website – [http://www.mna.org](http://www.mna.org)
• A radio contact source – [http://www.ontheradio.net/states/minnesota.aspx](http://www.ontheradio.net/states/minnesota.aspx)
• An online television guide – [http://newslink.org/mntele.html](http://newslink.org/mntele.html)
• Information on nonprofit media pitching – [http://nonprofit.about.com/od/nonprofitpromotion/a/pitching.htm](http://nonprofit.about.com/od/nonprofitpromotion/a/pitching.htm)
• Entrepreneur Magazine article on pitching the media – [http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/217576](http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/217576)

**Interviewing**

So you landed an interview. Now it is time to prepare. Here are some tips:

1. Know your top three **key messages** so you can naturally speak about them. Think about how you’ll connect to these key messages regardless of what question is asked (a technique called “bridging”).
2. **Practice.** Just like anything, being good at interviewing takes practice. Have someone you trust run through some mock questions with you, including some tough questions to make sure you are ready to manage them well.

3. **Be authentic.** Be yourself and tell your story. Mentoring is an incredible service to our youth and our communities. Relax and have a conversation about why mentoring is important. No one knows this better than you.

If your interview will be recorded on video, here are some on-camera suggestions:

- Always make eye contact with your interviewer – forget about the camera.
- Hands are the second most important feature. Don’t be static; let hand movements be natural.
- Don’t slump or swivel, and avoid fast movements. Sit up straight and relax.
- Speak clearly and concisely. Talk in complete sentences and avoid run-on sentences. That’s when most people trip up on their words or say “uh”/“um.” A brief pause between sentences is natural and allows you to think about what you are saying.
- Smile, unless it is a very serious story. People often forget to show joy when it’s a light-hearted story!
- Use the organization’s name and mentoring often, as it will be more likely to appear in the edited version.
- Don’t get up or take off the microphone until instructed to do so.
- Good colors to wear on TV are tans, blues and medium browns – almost any dark color. Don’t wear stripes, tweeds or herringbones.
- Make sure to read the morning’s newspapers so you’re up to date on current events in case you’re asked about them.
- Get to know the style and format of the show and listen to the host interview someone else before it’s your turn.

For all interview formats, here are a few things to avoid:

- Never answer with a simple “yes” or “no”. Use the opportunity to share your key messages concisely.
- Never say “no comment.” It sounds guilty. If you don’t know the answer, be honest and say you’ll look into it and follow up.
- Never go “off the record.” There’s no such thing.
- Don’t release information about a client or family without prior signed consent.
- Don’t give personal opinions that might compromise the organization. Never make partisan statements. That quote could end up as a headline in tomorrow’s paper!
Media Monitoring

After working hard on key messages, developing media materials and conducting media outreach, you’ll want to track your results to see if your work is growing awareness for your organization, a spokesperson or a particular issue. It is also important to track your results for reporting purposes and to showcase the impact public relations is having on an organization’s business goals and bottom line.

**TIP!** Use Google, Yahoo or Bing to set up “alerts” to track media coverage about “mentoring.”

**EXAMPLE:** The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota uses Google to track all media stories about “mentoring.”

To keep a record of your coverage, create a simple spreadsheet and track the following:

- The outlet that covered the story
- Date of the story
- Name of the reporter or blogger who wrote the story
- If a photo, video or sidebar was included
- If it was a positive, negative or neutral story
- Any quote(s) included from a spokesperson
- Key messages conveyed in the story
- Tangible results, such as a spike in website traffic, more incoming calls or an increase in donations
Repurposing Media Successes

Be sure to repurpose noteworthy media coverage to maximize its benefit. Consider the following ideas to extend the shelf life of a strong media placement:

- Frame an article in your lobby or in a visible place in your office.
- Include it in your media kit or any informational packet about your organization.
- Share it on your Facebook page, Twitter account, blog and website.
- Use it in recruiting materials.
- Reprint it and use it as leave-behind at meetings with important influencers.
- Refer and link to it in important documents, such as funding applications and grant proposals.
- Share it with your stakeholders, mentors and mentees.
- Email it with a personal note to funders, legislators, county commissioners, mayors and city council members.
- Share it with us, MPM, so we can spread the word about your success.
Social Media
Social Media and Public Relations

The use of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other social media tools to disseminate messages has grown exponentially, (as of January 2013, there were more than 1 billion monthly active Facebook users) and continues to trend upward. Using social media tools has become an effective way to expand reach, foster engagement and increase access to meaningful and real-time communication with constituents. Social media and other emerging communications can influence millions of voices to:

- Increase the timely circulation and potential impact of information about mentoring services, events and resources
- Leverage audience networks to facilitate information sharing
- Expand reach to include broader, more diverse audiences
- Personalize and reinforce messages, which can be targeted to specific audiences
- Facilitate interactive communication, connection and public engagement

Using Social Media

Social media is an essential part of any public relations plan today, enabling faster communication and information sharing with your key audiences, including volunteers, families, funders, mentoring organizations and others.

Take an Inventory of Your Organization’s Social Media Tools

- Does your organization have Facebook and Twitter accounts? How active are they?

  **TIP!** Linking both Facebook and Twitter accounts will decrease the time needed to manage posts.

- Does your organization use YouTube, Flickr or other rich media sharing websites? Is the content on those sites sorted, tagged and easily accessible?

Develop a social media strategy (who, what and when)

- Is there someone who is responsible for managing social media within your organization?
- If not, is there someone who can be identified and responsible for this role on an ongoing basis?
Based on your organization’s resources, consider how much time you can dedicate to managing and maintaining your social media tools. There are a lot of helpful tools, but only choose and use what you think is realistic for your organization to manage.

- How often will you post to Facebook and/or Twitter? How often will you produce videos or other rich media content?
- How will your editorial calendar (see Tools & Templates section) be prepared and managed?
- What will be your content review process for posting on social media channels? Social media is a dynamic medium that requires quick responses, but a great deal of content can also be pre-planned (e.g., mentor-mentee stories) and approvals can be obtained in advance to ensure a smooth posting process.

Social Media Resources


Social Media in Practice

Some Facebook and Twitter terms include:

- Twitter
  - **Tweet**: A Twitter post, limited to 140 characters
  - **Retweet (RT)**: Republishing another user’s tweet to your own followers
  - **Direct Message (DM)**: Sending a private message to a Twitter user
  - **Hashtag (#)**: Used to create clickable search terms in Twitter
  - **@Reply or @Mention**: Used to target specific Twitter users
- Facebook
  - **Friend**: A connection with another user on Facebook
  - **Page**: A non-personal profile, typically for clubs or businesses
  - **Like**: A way to share content on Facebook
Creating Content

The beauty of social media is that it is highly flexible. A good social media post is one that engages readers and invites conversations. Your organization should identify and converse with key influencers on social networks, comment on or share others’ content, identify advocates and follow them, and keep the tone of the conversation informal to invite ongoing dialogue.

Visual Content

Share visual content such as photos, video clips, infographics and other digital images often. These are powerful conversation drivers on social media sites. A 2012 study by HubSpot, a marketing software company, found that photos on Facebook pages received 55 percent more likes than the average post.

**EXAMPLE:** Posting infobites of the *State of Mentoring* report findings on the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota’s Facebook and Twitter accounts resulted in increased social engagement.

![Infographic Example](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Frequency of Posts

It’s important to post relevant information at a minimum of three to four times per week, including weekends, to keep your followers engaged. Planning and tracking your posts with an editorial calendar is a good way to stay organized and keep content flowing.
Content Ideas

To help find relevant and current articles and information, create a bookmark category on your browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, FireFox, Google Chrome, Safari) for approximately 10 to 20 websites to visit for pulling content. As mentioned previously, Google Alerts can be created for tracking media coverage and industry news about mentoring. Use these sources to find interesting quotes or questions to ask your followers, and remember to give credit where credit is due.

**TIP! Google Alerts:**

1. To set up a Google Alert: [http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en](http://www.google.com/alerts?hl=en)

2. In the “search query” box, type in your specific search. You may want to search what’s happening in your state or you may want to create multiple searches (e.g., “Mentoring in Minnesota” and “Duluth Mentoring”).

3. Select how often you want Google to send you alerts

Here are ideas to reference when you’re looking for a new post idea:

- **A photo, infographic, badge/content information, video or other visual with a short description of an organizational event or initiative.** A short blurb with a visual is highly shareable.

  **EXAMPLE:** To help promote 2013 National Mentoring Month, a dedicated social media badge was offered to mentors and mentoring organizations who visited the “I Am a Mentor” Facebook page.

- **An engaging personal story about an experience with mentoring.** Keep readers engaged by using lively descriptors and quotes, photos and other images with short posts.
• **An “editorial” on a current issue or news article.** Repost or link to an article that relates to mentoring, and share your own perspective. Mentoring organizations are full of thoughtful leadership and personal experiences that your local communities would love to hear about. Share your wealth of knowledge!

• **An inspirational quote.** Keep it short and sweet with a key quote from an influencer, an inspirational historical figure or excerpt from an article to inspire readers.

• **A reflection on a recent experience.** Rather than just recounting a story, analyze an experience or occurrence and reflect on what worked, what didn’t work and what you could have done differently.

• **An interview.** Conduct a short interview with a mentor, mentee or organization administrator and post his or her response (text or video).

• **A lighthearted post that shows mentors and mentees having a good time.** Post videos or photos of students, volunteers and workers singing, dancing, being active and having fun! No ulterior motive or deeper meaning necessary.

• **Organizational news.** A short post sharing news or updates about your organization is a simple way to keep content flowing.

  **TIP!** Recognize your funders after receiving a grant. Thank them for their support!

• **A poll.** Run a mini poll on a topic and report back on the results.

• **A list.** Try making a list. Topics are flexible. Examples: “Top 10 Memories During My Time as a Mentor” or “7 Ways to Successfully Engage with Middle School Students.” On Twitter, try a “Tip of the Day” for a week.

• **A series.** Have several contributors write about why they decided to volunteer as a mentor, or share their most heartwarming, stressful or rewarding experiences with the organization.

**Syndicating Content (The Lifecycle of a Social Media Post)**

Facebook, Twitter and other social media channels are synergistic – comments on one can feed interactions with the others. For example, a reader may not visit your organization’s blog regularly, but if she follows you on Twitter, an enticing cross-promoted tweet can guide her to a specific blog post. She may then retweet your tweet and so the conversation begins. If you have a blog or other central content platform, it’s
important to cross-promote new blog posts on other social media platforms to ensure they’re reaching the widest audience possible.

**TIP!** Consider using a syndication tool like HootSuite to repost your organization’s tweets to Facebook and other relevant social sharing websites such as LinkedIn or Google+.

Handling Comments

Responding to comments and @replies on your organization’s social media websites shows that you are invested in your readers and open to feedback. These two-way conversations foster a trusting, tightly knit community. However, it is not realistic to respond to all comments. Thus, we recommend the following protocol:

- Aim to respond directly to 50 percent of total unique comments or replies. For example, if a post generates 10 comments, try to respond to five.

**TIP!** If two people ask the same question on your organization’s Facebook or Twitter pages offer the same feedback, it’s OK to respond to them together.
The comments you choose to respond to should not be random. Prioritize them in this order:

1. **Correct misinformation.** Make sure to always respond to readers who are misinformed about your organization in some way. Responding to these participants directly will ensure that the misinformation does not spread further.

2. **Respond directly to questions.** Always answer questions when readers ask them. It will position your organization as a reliable, trusted source of information.

3. **Respond to constructive feedback and suggestions.** It is also important to respond to readers who offer feedback and suggestions for what they would like to see on your social media channels or within your organization. Thoughtful responses will demonstrate that you value all opinions and ideas.

4. **Thank readers for positive responses.** If you have checked numbers one, two and three off your list, move on to thanking readers who have commented that they liked your post. It is not absolutely essential to respond to these comments, but it is nice if you have the time.

5. **Thank readers for positive sentiments about your organization.** Don’t place a high priority on comments that simply declare a love for your organization. Responding to these kinds of comments is not usually constructive. If it’s all there is to choose from, use the opportunity to share more information.

**Deleting comments**

Leave comments uncensored whenever possible. Doing so will make your social media properties feel more genuine and less controlled. However, sometimes readers might leave comments that are harmful to your reputation. Here are some cases when you should delete comments:

- The comment shares confidential internal information.
- The comment is spam or otherwise irrelevant.
- The comment is too crude and/or profane for the blog’s audience.
- The comment is hurtful – not constructive – criticism. Use your judgment.
  - **Grounds for deleting:** “Your organization sucks and the kids you help are stupid.”
• **Grounds for a response**: “I was disappointed in last night’s event. It would have been much more effective if you only had two speakers. Can you try that next time?”

If you have a crisis that leads to dozens or hundreds of negative comments appearing in a short period of time on one of your organization’s social media websites, we recommend posting a reply that addresses your audience’s concerns, and updating it regularly so the reply remains at or near the top of the page. Explain the situation from your perspective, direct readers to a blog or another website where there will be a longer explanatory post, or direct them to other credible sources who can speak to their concerns, depending on the circumstances.

A comments policy should be posted on the information section of your Facebook page and any blogs you host. This policy should include clear information around what’s NOT acceptable and will be removed, such as profanity or racism. This policy will make it clear to readers that certain comments will not be tolerated, but that you will be consistent in your handling of their posts.

**EXAMPLE:** The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota includes the following comments policy on the information section of its Facebook page:

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**General Information**

Connect with the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota on Social Media:

- MPM on Twitter: [http://twitter.com/MPM1](http://twitter.com/MPM1)
- YouTube: [http://www.youtube.com/user/MinnesotaMentoring](http://www.youtube.com/user/MinnesotaMentoring)
- LinkedIn MN Mentoring Professionals Group: [http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular&gid=2894344](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular&gid=2894344)
- Slideshare: [http://www.slideshare.net/traininginstitute](http://www.slideshare.net/traininginstitute)
- Flickr: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/37519595@N04/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/37519595@N04/)

The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota reserves the right to remove comments, posts, or advertisements from this page. This may include posts that contain language that:
- Is defamatory, abusive, obscene, racist or otherwise hateful
- Is foul and/or vulgar
- Is offensive, threatening or infringes on the rights of others

Violation of this policy will result in your comment being removed and/or your account being blocked.
The last section of this toolkit will provide simple instructions on how to use various public relations tools & templates to get you started. Here’s an overview of the basic PR tools that haven’t been covered yet:

1. **PR Plan**
   The PR plan is a planning and execution tool for your organization’s communications efforts. It allows you to plot out your key initiatives and action steps, identify key measures of success and track your progress. The plan also serves as a great reference throughout the year to make sure you’re on schedule.

2. **Press Release**
   A press release is a standard form of communication with the media, used to communicate significant news.

3. **Pitch Email**
   A pitch email provides the “teaser” information to encourage a targeted reporter to read your press release or schedule an interview.

4. **Byline/Editorial (Op-Ed) Article**
   A byline or opinion editorial is a great way to position your spokesperson and company as credible, thought leader in a niche space.

5. **Fact Sheet**
   A fact sheet gives a high-level overview of your organization or news announcement. This information will not change often. It should answer, who are you and what you do.

6. **Editorial Calendar**
   An editorial calendar marries all communications efforts, including traditional media relations, social media content and marketing/advertising, so your overall key messages and branding are in alignment. This calendar should project out at least two to three months in advance and will evolve with new copy, images and other visuals throughout the year.

7. **Sample Social Media Posts**
   Social media posts can drive authentic engagement from your donors, supporters, mentors and mentees, creating advocates for your program throughout your community.
PR Plan

There isn’t a one-size-fits-all PR plan. The following example can serve as a guide for preparing a PR plan for your organization or upcoming communications effort.

**EXAMPLE:** PR Plan for Education Partners

Education Partners is the largest and oldest after-school tutoring program in Minnesota. We serve more than 10,000 school-age students annually in Minneapolis and St. Paul. We work collaboratively with the Minneapolis and St. Paul public schools, and annually our students show an average one point increase on their report card and a 12 percent decrease in absenteeism.

This uniquely collaborative approach helps Education Partners achieve its mission to help students keep pace with their classmates and be a resource to teachers as they strive to ensure all of their students meet or exceed academic standards.

One of the primary goals for 2013 is to expand our presence into suburban schools.

**Goals**

All efforts outlined in this plan are designed to help achieve three fundamental priorities:
- Build broad awareness of Education Partners in Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as in the communities where we hope to expand
- Increase our network of volunteers
- Strengthen tools to attract, retain and cultivate individuals committed to advocating on behalf of, or donating to, Education Partners.

**Objectives**

The PR plan will be guided by several measurable objectives, including:
- Increasing local traditional and social media coverage featuring Education Partners in 2013 by 30 percent
- Ensuring 80 percent of Education Partners’ media coverage contains targeted key messages
- Increasing the number of advocates willing to speak out on behalf of Education Partners by 40 percent, and our volunteer base by 20 percent
Strategies

1. Identify the most compelling stories the organization has to tell and showcase those stories in our communication.
2. Outline specific key messages that best tell the organization’s story and use those messages to guide all of our communication.
3. Identify key media and bloggers who regularly cover education and begin building relationships with them.
4. Identify neighborhood meetings or other influencer gatherings during which we could tell the Education Partners story.

Key Audiences

- Prospective volunteers
- Program advocates, including current parents, prospective parents, teachers and volunteers
- Board/staff members
- Donors and the broader public

Tactics

- **Key Message Development** – Establish a targeted list of key messages and proof points that will serve as a foundation for talking points, media materials, donor communications and much more. These messages will provide the platform for how Education Partners will be positioned to its key audiences through media and public speaking engagements.

- **Story Mining** – To ensure Education Partners leverages strong, newsworthy media angles, conduct a series of interviews with key staff and work with Education Partners leadership to vet and build out story angles. The final pitching grid will include story angles, key messages, supporting materials, target media outlets and timing for each identified story opportunity. These media angles will be leveraged throughout all phases of the plan.

- **Media Training** – Identify spokespeople and provide key messages and a media coaching session to ensure spokespeople more effectively communicate the power of the Education Partners mission and provide a clear call to action in each interview.
• **Media List Development** – Create a strong list of education media and blogger contacts and provide a targeted list of relevant media outlets and contacts that align with the pitching grid of potential story angles.

• **Volunteer/Donor Communications Strategy** – To ensure the organization maximizes all existing channels and takes a strategic approach to communication with volunteers and donors, refine our existing volunteer and donor communications strategy and make recommendations on the best way to use current vehicles and new tools to further engage volunteers.

• **Speaking Engagement Calendar** – Identify opportunities to tell the organization’s story, showcase the Education Partners video and ask a volunteer to share his or her story.

• **Maximizing Reactive Media Relations** – To make the most of the ongoing media inquiries Education Partners regularly receives, create a list of fast facts and key metrics to respond regularly to reporter inquiries and to distribute on an ongoing basis to cultivate existing relationships with reporters.

**Timeframe**

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<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Key Activities/Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE I: ESTABLISH THE COMMUNICATIONS FOUNDATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>• Research and planning sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Telling Your Story communication planning session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>• Finalize communication plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schedule media training session</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>• Receive plan input and approval</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Present to Education Partners board</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Finalize key messages</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct story mining and complete pitching grid</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conduct media training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Finalize media list</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Update volunteer and donor communications strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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| April 2013       | • Prioritize pitching grid and establish timeline for executing collaborative media outreach efforts  
                   • Finalize list of volunteer and donor development tactics and establish timeline for deliverables  
                   • Develop speaking engagement calendar |
| May 2013         | • Execute traditional and online/blogger media relations outreach, staff interviews in partnership with Education Partners  
                   • Develop the *Fast Facts* media sheet  
                   • Execute volunteer and donor development tactics |
| June – November 2013 | • Execute traditional and online/blogger media relations outreach, with a focus on back to school  
                            • Execute volunteer and donor development tactic |
| December 2013    | • Evaluate against objectives and begin planning for 2014 |
Press Release

Press releases are one of the most commonly used tools in a PR practitioner’s tool box. They are intended to bring the media’s attention to something new, innovative and significant. Avoid using a press release for “update” type of information.

Add links to external websites in your press releases and include a boilerplate paragraph at the end. A boilerplate is a standard description of your business that is used in press releases and other public-facing materials. Make sure your boilerplate is consistent with language used on your website or in other public-facing materials.


TIP! Use AP Style for all press releases and media materials.

EXAMPLE: Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Contact: Mai-Anh Kapanke
April 16, 2013 Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota
612-370-9169

Mentoring Gender Gap: Minnesota Needs More Male Mentors
Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota Releases
New Data from “State of Mentoring” Study

MINNEAPOLIS – April 16, 2013 – More than $7.5 million is the total value of time given by mentors in Minnesota, yet 250,000 youth throughout the state are in great need of an adult mentor in their lives. The most common reason for youth to be on a mentoring program waiting list is due to the lack of available mentors, according to a new “State of Mentoring” survey of 74 mentoring programs in Minnesota. The study, commissioned by the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, found that twice as many females mentor than males. Subsequently, 29 percent of male youth wait one year or more before being matched with a mentor, compared to only 5 percent of female youth.

“Minnesota is a strong mentoring state. We are proud there are 41,000 mentors and nearly 200,000 youth being mentored across the state,” said Joellen Gonder-Spacek,
executive director of Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota. “However, there is a great need in our state for more adults, men in particular, to serve as mentors to the youth in our communities. We’ve seen time and again that both youth and adults benefit from quality mentoring relationships.”

While the “State of Mentoring” study revealed a high need for more mentors in every community, it also showed that once mentors are matched with youth, they often willingly go beyond the expectations of the programs:

- Nearly nine out of 10 mentoring matches either meet or exceed the program’s goal for the minimum length of commitment. The most common commitment is 9-12 months.
- More than 80 percent of matches meet or exceed the required meeting frequency, with over half of mentoring meetings occurring weekly.

The survey also highlighted the following facts about mentoring in Minnesota:

- Mentoring programs for middle school-aged children are the most common, followed by programs for high school-aged youth.
- Teachers are the top referral source for mentoring programs, which wasn’t the case five years ago when most referrals came from social workers.
- While most mentoring matches meet out in the community (64 percent), nearly one third (28 percent) meet at a community-based organization or a school.
- With approximately 300 mentoring programs in Minnesota, 62 percent of these programs serve the Twin Cities metro area, 36 percent serve Greater Minnesota and less than two percent serve residents statewide.

To download a copy of the “State of Mentoring” study, go to [www.mpmn.org](http://www.mpmn.org). For more information about mentoring in Minnesota, contact Mai-Anh Kapanke at mai-anh@mpmn.org or 612-370-9169.

###

**Study Background**

Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM) conducted the “State of Mentoring in Minnesota” survey in summer 2012, which captured a full year of program data from 2011. A total of 74 programs responded to the survey, sharing information about their organizational and program structure, participants and evaluations. Currently, 188 mentoring programs in Minnesota have received training from MPM and are registered programs with MPM.

**About Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota**

MPM formed in 1994 as a community initiative to promote mentoring for Minnesota youth. The efforts of the organization translate into more caring adults mentoring a generation of children and youth at every level of our community. Due to hard work and great successes, MPM is the driving force in the Minnesota mentoring movement and leads the state in building and sustaining quality mentoring for every child. For more information about MPM, visit [www.mpmn.org](http://www.mpmn.org).
Pitch Email

The pitch email is a critical part of media outreach; the more concise the better. Below is a sample pitch email from the 2012 *State of Mentoring* report pitch. Please note:

- Attention-catching subject line and lead paragraph including key messages
- Emphasis on compelling statistics and supporting facts
- Personal example of mentoring and offer of a spokesperson

**EXAMPLE: Pitch email**

**Email Subject Line:** New *State of Mentoring* Report: Gender Gap in Mentoring in Minnesota - More Male Mentors are Needed

Hi [insert reporter name],

Quality mentoring experiences for youth are widely recognized as successful youth prevention and intervention strategies. **More than $7.5 million is the total value of time given by mentors in Minnesota.** In 2011 mentors contributed more than 153,000 hours to help youth across our state, but the demand is still high. Approximately 250,000 youth could benefit from a mentoring relationship.

A new “State of Mentoring” survey from Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM), a nonprofit organization that supports 300 youth mentoring programs through training, education, and marketing around quality mentoring in Minnesota, found a significant gender gap in mentoring across the state – **revealing a great need for more male mentors in particular.**

Twice as many females mentor than males in Minnesota. **Subsequently, 29 percent of male youth wait one year or more before being matched with a mentor, compared to only 5 percent of female youth.**

To find out more about the state of mentoring in Minnesota, see the press release below and consider scheduling an interview with Joellen Gonder-Spacek, executive director of Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota.

I can also connect you with Tommy and Julio, who were matched through the Athletes Committed to Educating Students (ACES) mentoring program. The two have only been matched for a few months and have developed a bond over common interests, academics and athletics. Tommy is a student at the University of Minnesota and Julio is a 7th grader at Monroe Arts Plus Magnet.

In addition to the press release, an infographic and a study report are available at [www.mpmn.org](http://www.mpmn.org). [Insert links to infographic and study report]. Feel free to contact me with any questions at [insert email] or [insert phone number].
Byline/Editorial (Op-Ed) Article

Byline/opinion editorials are articles (typically 500-1,500 words) that allow an organization to educate and provide thought leadership in a targeted publication. Bylines often appear in business or trade publications, and opinion editorials are published in a newspaper's editorial section.

Below is an example opinion editorial that ran in the St. Paul Pioneer Press in January during 2012 National Mentoring Month.

EXAMPLE: Opinion editorial

Chuck Slocum: A mentor, inspired to reconnect
Published: January 25, 2012

Former U.S. Army General and Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell says in a video I received that all kids should "stay in school" and deserve "a productive and fulfilling future." Powell's comments were in support of January being National Mentoring Month.

For most of my adult life I have been a mentor to children, especially the last 13 years when some special training and clearances allowed my wife and me to work in more formal settings with kids and their parents. Powell's video reminded me that to be a mentor a person does not need special skills, just an ability to listen and to offer friendship, guidance and encouragement to a young person. Powell is correct when he says "we all will be amazed by how much we get out of the experience."

January is a great month to salute mentoring, as the just completed celebratory holiday season invited frequent socializing. In December, encouraged by Powell's video, I made a couple of dozen one-on-one connections for some quality time with kids, some not so young anymore, whom we love and care about.

Among them:

-- My first unofficial mentee, Kim, came over for a homemade meal and some good, old-fashioned talk. She's age 31 now.
-- Andy, 16, spent an overnight, helping us to prepare for the Christmas season; he aided in placing some 77 of my wife’s Santa ornaments on the tree.

-- Young John, a third-grader, was the first person to read back to me my children’s Christmas story; it was my 26th year of writing one.

-- I played some outdoors basketball on a balmy winter day with second-grader Jacy.

-- Brett came over for hot tea and apple pie with his girlfriend Cori, sharing the story of their new and promising relationship; they are doctoral students at Dartmouth.

-- Lily, age 8, performed marvelously in a ballet in downtown Minneapolis we attended with her parents.

-- Alek, 15, a goddaughter born in Russia, took time with us for an evening of hot chili and ice skating.

-- College graduate John, performing marvelously in his first professional job, treated me to a hamburger, accompanied by his grad school brother Ted.

-- Fourth grader Kayla was lots of fun when we together built a toothpick house in fierce competition with two other teams.

-- Owen and Eddy, young brothers, beat my wife and me in a YMCA game of hoops; the score was 20-8 despite our significant height advantage.

-- I got to dress up and play Santa Claus for a number of families, including that of Andrew, 4, a true believer, and his more skeptical older brother Devin, 8.

-- Rafael, now 23 and working steadily, and his sister Brittany, a 21-year-old college student, joined us for Christmas Eve church and dinner. Their loving Mom was with us, too.

The parents of half of Minnesota’s kids say they’d welcome an adult mentor to help their children succeed, yet only about one in three has such a person available. Sadly, countless other young people are not on a waiting list of any sort and could use a caring adult to be a part of their lives.

Mentoring is a way to support a child in making important decisions that can be extremely helpful along the way to adulthood, in my experience.

With the oncoming retirements within the baby boomer generation, by 2020 we will have more senior citizens than children in Minnesota. These senior citizens - myself included
- will number in the hundreds of thousands and offer young parents and their kids a potentially powerful volunteer resource.

Chuck Slocum (Chuck@WillistonGroup.Com) is president of the Williston Group. He was named "National Mentor of the Year" in 2005 for his volunteer work with Life Coaches for Kids. For further information, go to the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota website http://www.mpmn.org/Home.aspx.
Fact Sheet

An organizational fact provides a snapshot of vital information about the organization. Below is an example of how a fact sheet could be organized.

**EXAMPLE:** Fact sheet

The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota (MPM) formed in 1994 as a community initiative to promote mentoring for Minnesota youth. MPM leads the mentoring movement to ensure youth and mentors have access to high-quality mentoring experiences.

**MPM's Long-Range Vision:** All children in Minnesota have caring adult mentors

**MPM Mission:** Our mission is to lead the state in building and sustaining quality mentoring for every child.

**What We Do:**

- Support more than 400 youth mentoring programs through training, technical assistance, and marketing around quality mentoring
- Provide resources on how to initiate and maintain a mentoring program
- Educate the public on the importance of mentoring and lead statewide public awareness campaigns
- Lead National Mentoring Month in Minnesota during the month of January
- Host the region's only annual mentoring conference focused exclusively on supporting quality mentoring
- Recruit caring adults to become mentors and provide referrals to youth mentoring programs
- Host an interactive website to connect interested volunteers and young people to mentoring programs across the state
- Shape public policy to increase funding and support for all youth mentoring programs

**Why We Do What We Do:**
Mentoring works! Young people who have mentors have a better chance of succeeding and are more likely to make positive choices. Yet in Minnesota there are an estimated 250,000 at-risk young people who need and could benefit from an adult mentor.
Editorial Calendar

A typical editorial calendar outlines content two to three months in advance and will incorporate important themes throughout the year, such as national events or designation months that recognize volunteers or mentors. However, the calendar should be treated as a living document.

**EXAMPLE:** Editorial calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Link or Image</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 9</td>
<td>Copy about a recent mentoring event</td>
<td>Photo of the event</td>
<td>Social media manager</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 retweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14</td>
<td>Timely post linking to news story on mentoring</td>
<td>Link</td>
<td>Social media manager</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td>News story picked up via Google Alerts on May 13</td>
<td>3 likes; 2 follower comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 16</td>
<td>Copy about executive director’s new blog post commenting on recent developments in mentoring</td>
<td>Link to blog post</td>
<td>Executive director to provide copy</td>
<td>Scheduled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Sample Social Media Posts

Social media allows your organization to speak directly to your target audiences. Below are some sample social media posts from the 2012 State of Mentoring report pitch. Please note:

- Compelling visuals when available
- Reposting and retweeting of relevant news coverage
- Numerous posts sharing different aspects of the overall story to increase its longevity on social media

**EXAMPLE:** Social media posts